



Teamwork: Be Your Provider's Partner

Information and Resources to Help Make the Most of Your Visit

Have you ever come out of an appointment with your health care provider and felt you didn't understand a word that was said? Or, have you ever left with a list of questions which were not answered?

We are each responsible for taking charge of our own health by learning to work as a team with our health care provider.

Your provider may only have a brief time to spend with you. To use that time together to your advantage, it is good to prepare for your visit.

Communication is the Key

Just as a good provider must listen carefully to you as a patient, you must learn to communicate clearly with your provider.

To get the most from your visit, try the tips on this page.

Before the Visit or Getting Ready

- ☐ Complete all the paperwork given or sent to you.
- ☐ Think about what you want to know about your health. Write down the questions you want to ask. List one or two of your most pressing concerns. Write down the answers to the following questions:
 - ☐ Describe the problem or symptoms: Where is it? When did it start?
 - ☐ Does anyone else at home have the same problem?
 - ☐ What do you think is causing it? What have you tried? Did it work?
 - ☐ Do you have pain? Where and what type of pain? How long did it last?
 - ☐ Have you recently begun a diet or started exercising? Or lost weight?
 - ☐ Be accurate; don't exaggerate, understate, or leave facts out.

The Day of the Visit

- ☐ Follow all directions. Don't eat or drink if you are instructed not to.
- ☐ Bring your list of all medicines, herbals and nutritional supplements that you are taking. Include the name, strength or dose amount, number of pills you take each time, what times of day you take them.
- ☐ Bring your logs, diaries and records of your symptoms.
- ☐ Wear clothing that is easy to take off and put on.
- ☐ Be on time and be sure to check in.
- ☐ Bring something to do or read while in the Waiting Room.
- ☐ Bring a paper and pen to take notes. Remember to bring your glasses.

The Appointment

- ☐ Consider bringing a relative or friend to help you in asking questions, or if you think you might have trouble understanding or hearing.
- ☐ Repeat what the provider says in your own words to be sure you understand.
- ☐ Keep the conversation on track. Focus on questions that matter to you.
- ☐ Tell the provider if you don't understand. It's okay to say: "Wait a minute, I don't get it," or to ask what a word means.

Closing the Visit

- ☐ Do you know what the next step in your care is? Let the provider know if you cannot or will not do what is suggested.
- ☐ Ask for written information about your medicines, condition, illness and treatment. Make sure you know exactly how to take the medications including the time of day you should take them.
- ☐ If you have more to discuss than time allows, ask for another appointment.
- ☐ Ask who to call if you have questions or concerns. Call your provider later if you think of something you forgot to ask after you leave.
- ☐ Don't leave without understanding what to do to be as healthy as possible.





Questions and Answers:

You are an important member of your health care team. Your questions are important! Please use these sheets to write down questions you might want to ask. Keep it available for when team members are with you so your questions can be answered.

Name(s) of provider(s): _____

I want to learn more about my:

☐ **Diagnosis:**

What's wrong with me, what causes it, and how serious is it?

☐ **Tests:**

Please explain any tests I will take. Why am I taking this test? Are there any restrictions or preparation(s) before and after my test? What will happen to me during the test? What will happen after the test?

☐ **Results:**

Please tell me how I'll find out about the results. Will I be told if something is all right, or only if it needs attention?

☐ **Medications:**

Tell me about the side effects of the medicine you want to give me. Can I take this with my other medications?

☐ **Diet:**

What diet should I follow? Are there any foods I should not eat?

☐ **Danger signals:**

What should I report back to you?

☐ **Options:**

What other choices do I have?

My Other Questions:

NOTES:

